



BLUEGRASS STATE SKILLS CORPORATION

GRANT-IN-AID GUIDELINES

FY 2014-2015



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INTRODUCTION

The Bluegrass State Skills Corporation (BSSC) was established in 1984 by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to stimulate economic development through customized business and industry-specific skills training programs. The BSSC works with business and industry and Kentucky's educational institutions to establish programs of skills training.

An eighteen-member Board of Directors, including representatives of business, government, education, and labor, governs the BSSC. The Board is made up of private sector individuals as well as public officials. The public officials, who serve as ex-officio members on the Board, include the Secretaries of the Cabinet for Economic Development, Education Cabinet, and Labor Cabinet, as well as the President of the Council on Post-secondary Education, the President of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and the Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Investment.

The purpose of the BSSC is to improve and promote employment opportunities for the residents of the Commonwealth through skills training assistance.

The BSSC's main functions are:

- ◆ To administer and fund customized business and industry-specific training through agreements for Grant-in-Aid and Skills Training Investment Credit incentives;
- ◆ To act as a broker by coordinating the resources of providers of skills training and employment services;
- ◆ To facilitate the creation of public/private partnerships through education and training programs designed to meet training needs of individual and multiple company (training consortia) training projects; and
- ◆ To administer any special state appropriations for customized business and industry-specific training.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The schedule for submission deadlines for grant applications and BSSC Board of Directors meetings are as follows:

SUBMISSION DEADLINE	BOARD MEETING DATE
June 16, 2014	July 30, 2014
August 15, 2014	September 24, 2014
October 15, 2014	December 3, 2014
December 15, 2014	January 28, 2015
February 17, 2015	March 25, 2015
April 15, 2015	May 27, 2015

All meetings will begin at 1:00pm and will be held at the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Conference Center in Frankfort. Notices of the meetings will be published in advance of the meetings. The BSSC reserves the right to schedule, reschedule, or cancel a board meeting at its discretion.

GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM

The purpose of the Grant-in-Aid program is to improve and promote employment opportunities for residents of the Commonwealth through training grants to business and industry. The program provides reimbursement dollars to companies/consortia for company specific training activities.

FUNDING CAPS

It is the intent of the BSSC to provide for the equitable distribution of BSSC funds to eligible companies. Therefore, the following funding caps have been established:

- ◆ Applications must include \$6,000 in reimbursable costs to be considered.
- ◆ The maximum grant amount that an individual company may receive is:
 - ◆ \$25,000 (1 to 499 KY resident, full-time employees); or
 - ◆ \$50,000 (500 or more KY resident, full-time employees)
- ◆ A consortium may receive a grant up to a maximum of \$75,000.
- ◆ All applications are further limited based upon a calculation of the total number of trainees multiplied by \$2,000.

Unused Funds: Approved companies shall notify the BSSC if they find they are unable to use all or a portion of the funds that have been set aside for them. These unused funds will then be reallocated. Companies that act responsibly in this manner are in no way penalized when applying for future BSSC funding.

ELIGIBLE COMPANIES

Companies must be registered and in good standing with the Secretary of State's Office. Eligible BSSC companies are separated into five categories:

- ◆ **Manufacturing** - Any Kentucky manufacturing company is eligible for BSSC funding.
- ◆ **Service and Technology (non-retail)** - The BSSC also provides training funds for Kentucky's non-retail, service and technology companies. A service and technology company is considered an eligible company if the company provides a service to or uses technology for customer or affiliate entities predominantly outside the Commonwealth or is designed to serve a multistate, national, or international market.
- ◆ **Headquarters** – Headquarter operations are eligible for BSSC funding. Headquarters means the principal office where the principal executives of the entity are located and from which other personnel, branches, affiliates, offices or entities are controlled.
- ◆ **Public or Non-Profit Hospitals** - Public or non-profit hospitals licensed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky are eligible BSSC applicants.
- ◆ **Consortia:** The BSSC Board of Directors promotes collaborative training initiatives and provides priority consideration for training agreements that demonstrate the willingness of multiple companies to work together through training consortia. The following points must be addressed in a consortium application:
 - ◆ The common training needs of the participating companies;
 - ◆ The effort is industry-driven;
 - ◆ There is collaboration by the area providers of employment and training services;
 - ◆ There is an overall savings in training costs because of the collaborative effort (must be able to document the overall cost savings); and
 - ◆ The project will facilitate the advancement of the host community's economic development efforts;

An eligible consortium application shall include three or more BSSC eligible companies, appoint an administrator and authorize an administrator to act on their behalf. Consortium projects shall

include a listing of the member companies and a "lead company" whose representative is authorized by the consortium to provide his/her signature on behalf of the consortium.

Unless otherwise specified herein, BSSC requires that at least three consortium member companies be engaged and participate together in any single training activity on the Training Plan page of the application. The applicant consortium may request an exception under specific circumstances as follows:

1. A newly formed consortium (one year from start date of initial application) may request on its initial application for a Grant-in-Aid project that a minimum of two consortium member companies be allowed to participate in a single training activity; and
2. An existing consortium may request that a minimum of three consortium member companies be allowed to participate individually in the same type of single training activity on the Training Plan page of the application, as long as the individual trainee cost of the single training activity is the same for each participating company.

Any firm, company, consultant, or institution whose primary business is to provide training or training consultation for a fee is not eligible for BSSC grant funds. Retail establishments will be eligible to apply only when specific funds for grants-in-aid to retail businesses are appropriated by the General Assembly. At this time, no funds have been appropriated by the General Assembly, therefore retail establishments are not eligible.

A company or member of a consortium that has been found (adjudicated) to have committed a willful Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) violation within three previous years is not eligible to apply for BSSC funds. If a company is approved for funding and is then found (adjudicated) to have committed a willful OSHA violation during the life of a BSSC grant, no remaining funds will be paid to the company from the date the willful violation is made known to the BSSC.

CO-APPLICANT

The application may be written and submitted by the company alone or submitted jointly with a co-applicant. A co-applicant must be either a public or non-public secondary or post-secondary educational institution, or an independent (private or proprietary) provider within the Commonwealth authorized by law to deliver a program of skills training or education.

ELIGIBLE TRAINEES

Participants (i.e. trainees) in the BSSC program must be limited to residents of the Commonwealth who are seeking or have already obtained permanent full-time employment. A full-time employee is a Kentucky resident who is employed by the qualified company to work for a minimum of 35 hours per week and is subject to the tax imposed by KRS 141.020. Full-time employees do not include contract or seasonal labor.

Pursuant to KRS 141.010(17): "Resident" means an individual domiciled within this state or an individual who is not domiciled in this state, but maintains a place of abode in this state and spends in the aggregate more than 183 days of the taxable year in this state.

Trainee Minimum Wage Rate and Benefits: A goal of the BSSC program is to stimulate economic development by establishing a minimum wage rate of 150% of the federal minimum wage (\$10.88 per hour). In addition to the applicable minimum hourly wage, the eligible company shall provide employee benefits equal to at least fifteen percent (15%) of the applicable minimum hourly wage for trainees on grant applications to be considered by the board. The term "employee benefits" is defined as "payments by an approved company for its full-time employees for health

insurance, life insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, defined benefits, 401(k) or similar plans.” If the eligible company does not provide employee benefits equal to at least fifteen percent (15%) of the applicable minimum hourly wage rate of \$10.88 per hour, the eligible company may qualify under this section if it provides the employees a total hourly compensation equal to or greater than one hundred fifteen percent (115%) of the applicable minimum hourly wage through increased hourly wages combined with employee benefits (\$12.51 per hour).

ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER

A company may choose to use in-house trainers, educational institution regular or adjunct faculty, training consultants, or a combination thereof. Companies are free to use any provider they choose. BSSC does not recommend, endorse, certify or advertise for any particular training providers. Training Providers are not permitted to use the BSSC name in any of their advertisements, brochures, or other promotional materials for the purpose of soliciting or obtaining customers.

ELIGIBLE TRAINING COSTS

Specific skills training programs may be customized for a particular company/consortium to encompass one or more of the following eligible training costs. The BSSC gives preference to training projects that create, maintain, and promote higher wage jobs, given its statutory mandate to improve and promote the employment opportunities of the residents of the Commonwealth. BSSC will provide reimbursement funds for fifty percent (50%) of total eligible costs up to the maximum allowable funding cap.

A. In-House Training

The BSSC will reimburse the company/consortium for fees or salaries required to be paid to instructors who are employees of the company in connection with an occupational or skills upgrade training program sponsored by a company that includes company specific classroom and on-the-job training. (For eligibility, training must be a minimum of 30 minutes and may be claimed in increments of 15 minutes above the 30 minute minimum.)

The BSSC will reimburse the company/consortium at a rate of \$25 per hour for instruction and curriculum development activities where company employees serve as in-house training instructors. The company/consortium shall provide a match of \$25 per hour for in-house instructor training costs. This match may be in the form of in-kind contributions such as company-paid wages to the trainer and trainees. The BSSC will also reimburse for curriculum development services. (**Note:** \$25 per hour as used herein is equal to fifty percent (50%) of the total eligible rate of \$50 per hour).

The BSSC will reimburse for curriculum development to support in-house training activities based on a rate of five (5) development hours for each one (1) hour of instructional time included within an application. A company may use an Educational Institution or a Consultant for curriculum development for company in-house courses. The curriculum must be company specific and remain with the company. A copy of the curriculum must be submitted to the BSSC before final certification is issued. Modification to existing curriculum is not allowed as a separate charge.

B. Educational Institution and Consultant Training

The BSSC will reimburse the company/consortium for fees or salaries required to be paid to full-time, part-time, or adjunct instructors with an educational institution; instructors who are consultants on contract with a company; and per employee training costs. Eligible training in this circumstance shall include job related classroom training, tuition courses, certifications, trainer development, licensing, online training, and video conferencing. Registration fees for annual meetings, conferences, or seminars without proof of training are **not** eligible for tuition reimbursement. It is

not the intent of the BSSC to provide funds for Continuing Education Units or tuition courses that are not specifically related to the employee's current or future job function.

C. Instructional Materials, Texts and Supplies

The BSSC will reimburse for the actual reasonable costs of instructional materials, texts and supplies used exclusively in an occupational or skills upgrade training program sponsored by a company/consortium. Instructional materials and texts include training manuals and text books in hard copy or electronic formats and instructional materials (overheads, photocopies, etc.). Supplies include paper, pencils, highlighters and easel pads. The BSSC will only provide reimbursement for shop training materials (welding rods, scrap metal, etc.) used for classroom instruction and not for on-the-job training activities.

D. Train-the-Trainer Travel

The primary purpose of train-the-trainer travel is to build the training capacity of Kentucky's businesses and industries. This activity involves training provided at an in-state company site or at an out-of-state or offshore company location in which a person employed by the applicant company is being trained to become a training instructor for the company. In the preceding scenario, the company employee being trained as a trainer must be a Kentucky resident. Eligible train-the-trainer travel activities also include company employees that travel from other company locations to the applicant company. Under this second scenario, the company employee who is already designated a trainer is not required to be a Kentucky resident.

The approved company is eligible to receive reimbursement for travel expenses including round-trip transportation and lodging while on travel status, with the requirement that all other costs are to be paid by the company and/or the individual.

Transportation: Round-trip air transportation for international or domestic flights from the nearest major airport to the nearest host city served by a major airport are eligible, supported by receipts for documentation. Local ground transportation including rental car, taxi service, fuel expenses or public transportation documented with receipts is also eligible. Vehicle rental and/or fuel expense may be reimbursed in lieu of air travel not to exceed the amount of lowest available airfare. In no case will the BSSC pay for other related travel costs including food, passports, phone calls, laundry, entertainment, sightseeing, gratuities, etc.

Lodging: The approved company is eligible to receive reimbursement for lodging at actual rates not to exceed fifty percent (50%) of the Federal Per Diem rate (see www.GSA.Gov and select "Per Diem Rates" from the navigation bar for federal rates) for that location.

E. Employee Wages

The company/consortium is eligible to receive reimbursement for employee (i.e. trainee) wages to be paid while training during an occupational or skills upgrade training program sponsored by a company. The wage used for reimbursement will be the average wage submitted on the approved application.

F. Registered Apprenticeship – Year-One Apprentices

The BSSC will reimburse \$2,000 per year-one apprentices enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program during the term of the approved agreement. Participation in registered apprenticeship will be verified by the Kentucky Labor Cabinet's Director of Apprenticeship.

Note: Safety, mandated or regulatory training is not allowed as a stand-alone training activity. Safety Management or Safety Recording Keeping is considered safety training and is not allowed. Safety, mandatory or regulatory training includes but is not limited to: blood

borne pathogens, control of hazardous materials, lockout/tagout, emergency action plan, emergency response, hazard communication, hearing conservation, safe electrical workplaces (all OSHA), and stand alone safety (including first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), emergency medical technician (EMT), etc).

LENGTH OF AGREEMENT

Grant-in-aid agreements shall be up to one (1) year in length from the approved start date. **Grant-in-aid applications shall not contain any retroactive training.**

BSSC FUNDING PROCESS

- ◆ **Completion of BSSC Application** – An educational institution and a business or industry may submit a joint application to the BSSC detailing the training to be provided. To qualify for a grant in which a provider other than an educational institution will provide training, the business or industry may independently submit an application to the BSSC detailing the desired training. All applications will be arrival time and date stamped upon receipt as long as required signature pages are included.
- ◆ **Submission of Application** – Complete, signed applications are due in the BSSC office by the submission date found under the Application Submission and Board Meeting Schedule of these guidelines.
- ◆ **Evaluate and Score Application** – BSSC staff review applications for eligibility, completeness and accuracy and verify the calculation of the score. Staff may contact the applicant if there are any questions. Upon completion of staff's review, eligible applications are submitted to the BSSC Board for funding consideration. Not all applications submitted are approved by the BSSC Board.
- ◆ **Approval of Training Application** – If the BSSC Board of Directors approves the training application, an approval letter indicating the amount of BSSC funding is emailed to the company contact and educational institution contact if applicable. An agreement is also sent to the company for execution. Upon receipt of the executed agreement from the applicant, the agreement will be signed by BSSC and becomes effective. A copy of the agreement will be returned to the applicant. Information to assist in maintaining documentation and requesting reimbursement payments can be found on our website.
- ◆ **Submission of Reimbursement Request** – All requests for reimbursement will be submitted to the BSSC in the form of a Reimbursement Worksheet along with any other required documentation. To expedite the reimbursement process, a reminder of the training end date may be sent to the company.
- ◆ **Interim Reimbursement Process (If applicable)** – Up to two (2) Interim reimbursements can be requested before the training program is completed. After the BSSC staff reviews the Reimbursement Worksheet and it is found to be complete and satisfactory, the payment will be processed. A check will then be forwarded to the company or a payment will be deposited electronically in the company's account.
- ◆ **Final Reimbursement** – The company is responsible for notifying BSSC staff once the training is completed to initiate the final reimbursement. If notification is not received within one year after the date of approval, BSSC staff will contact the company and provide the requirements for final reimbursement. When the training has been completed and the final reimbursement is being requested, the company will sign and forward the Reimbursement Worksheet to the

BSSC. This document provides detailed information on eligible costs incurred in instruction and materials categories. The company will also complete and forward a Performance Evaluation Questionnaire.

ORGANIZED LABOR

When a collective bargaining unit exists at the work site where the proposed training will be provided, the company shall provide written notification to the on-site collective bargaining agent of the company's intention to apply for BSSC funding. Notification shall include a summary of the proposed curriculum and shall occur prior to the time that the company files the proposal with the BSSC. A copy of the notification indicating the date the notice was provided, the sender, and the recipient, shall be filed with the BSSC application.

One of the goals of the BSSC is to promote cooperative training activities between a company and its employees. Therefore, a proposed skills training application will not be approved during a legal work stoppage and an active training application will be postponed during a legal work stoppage.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Persons shall not be discriminated against in accordance with KRS 344.040. The BSSC is interested in training a diverse array of individuals under its programs. The BSSC has not set numerical goals for the types of individuals to be trained because it recognizes that the trainee profile of the individual training programs will vary depending upon the employee profile of the applicant company.

APPLICATION SCORING

In order to qualify for BSSC funding, a grant-in-aid application must earn a minimum score of **60 points**. Applications that do not meet this requirement will not be considered by the BSSC Board of Directors and will be returned to the applicant.

No.	Description	Criteria	Points
1	Company/Consortium Status*	<i>(Total number of Kentucky residents employed in permanent, full-time positions)</i> Existing company of 100 or less Existing company of 101 – 500 Existing company of 501 – 1,000 Existing company of 1,001 or more	20 15 10 5
2	Area of Need (Percentage Above or Below Kentucky's Average BSSC Index)	(See Area of Need Chart) More than 25% Below 0% to 25% Below Greater Than 0% to 25% Above Greater Than 25% Above	20 15 10 5
3	Trainees Average Hourly Wage Rate (excluding Benefits)	\$16.00 or less \$16.01 or more	15 20
4	Progressive Company Initiatives	See details below	40 (max)

*The employment figures for all participating consortium member companies are averaged to determine the proper category for criteria #1.

The scores for criteria 4 are based on information contained in the application regarding the company's philosophies and role in Kentucky's economy. Listed below are the criteria and potential points associated with each. In order to receive the point(s) for a criterion, the applicant company/consortium must demonstrate in the application that it is already participating in the activity. The point(s) will not be given if the applicant is just beginning to train in the activity. When a criterion requires examples, points will only be given if examples are provided in the application.

Progressive Company Initiatives - (maximum of 40 points)

Description	Points
This application is a consortium application	40
Company was not approved for any BSSC incentives during previous BSSC fiscal year (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014)	15
Expanding Company adding more than 10% new, full-time jobs for Kentucky residents paying a minimum hourly wage of \$10.88 with a minimum of 15% benefits	10
Expanding Company adding more than 5% and up to 10% new, full-time jobs for Kentucky residents paying a minimum hourly wage of \$10.88 with a minimum of 15% benefits	5
Expanding Company adding 5% or less new, full-time jobs for Kentucky residents paying a minimum hourly wage of \$10.88 with a minimum of 15% benefits	2
Career growth: trainee receives pay increase as a result of training project. Must include percent or dollar amount of pay increase and identification of class title (example required)	5
Participates in development of future workforce through activities that prepare students for work including, but not limited to: co-op, work study, career days, job shadowing, school-to-work, TRACK, etc. (example required)	4
Grant includes training that is part of a Registered Apprenticeship program (as defined by the Labor Cabinet)	4
Grant includes training for post-9/11 veterans who served on active duty and were discharged or released for other than dishonorable discharge	3
Company is an active member of an industry partnership or consortia that is primarily focused on training and workforce development. (example required)	3

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Modifications

A company/consortium may request one extension up to a maximum of six months for a grant-in-aid in the event more time is needed to complete training. Requests must be made prior to the original grant expiration date and be in the form of a letter to the executive director giving justification for the request.

A consortium may request a modification to add additional eligible companies to the grant-in-aid in order to allow additional companies to participate. Requests must be made in the form of a letter to the executive director giving justification for the request.

All modification requests must be signed by both the applicant company/consortium and educational institution (if applicable) that submitted the original application. Modifications will not become effective until received, reviewed by the BSSC staff, and approved by the executive director.

The BSSC may allow deviations from the original application with no written modification request if the approved amount of the grant does not increase and the change(s) is in accordance with the BSSC Guidelines.

B. Reimbursements

All payments to companies/consortia by the BSSC will be on a cost reimbursement basis supported by documentation capable of being successfully audited. Reimbursement for educational institution and consultant training will be based on copies of the invoice(s) from the provider to the company/consortium which clearly identify the work performed, cost involved and proof of payment. Reimbursement for company in-house training will be based on a training summary document that identifies the training performed and paid receipt(s) for approved materials purchased or approved activities performed. The training summary document shall include the following information: 1) dates of classes, 2) class titles, 3) instructor name(s) and hours taught, 4) number of trainees per class, 5) total number of unduplicated trainees, 6) trainee wages, and 7) close with a statement certifying that all trainees are Kentucky residents, signed by a company representative. Supporting documentation from which the training summary document is prepared must be maintained on site by the company/consortium for a period of five years from the end date of the project and must be available to independent auditor(s) and/or the staff of BSSC upon request.

See our website for complete reimbursement instructions and forms. Reimbursements may be requested up to three times for each approved project with the third being the final request. The company/consortium may maintain a master list on site of all trainees who participated in all BSSC-funded training with company identification numbers or the last four digits of the trainees' social security numbers, city and state instead of this information being collected on sign in sheets.

AREA OF NEED

Percentage Above or Below Kentucky's Average BSSC Index
Points may vary on application. Index will be updated May 1 for Current Fiscal Year

Name	Points
Multi County	Averaged-based on counties
Statewide	5
Adair	15
Allen	15
Anderson	10
Ballard	10
Barren	15
Bath	20
Bell	20
Boone	5
Bourbon	15
Boyd	10
Boyle	15
Bracken	15
Breathitt	20
Breckinridge	15
Bullitt	10
Butler	15
Caldwell	15
Calloway	15
Campbell	10
Carlisle	15
Carroll	10
Carter	20
Casey	20
Christian	15
Clark	10
Clay	20
Clinton	20
Crittenden	15
Cumberland	20
Daviess	10
Edmonson	15
Elliott	20
Estill	20
Fayette	10
Fleming	15
Floyd	15
Franklin	10
Fulton	15
Gallatin	15
Garrard	15

Grant	15
Graves	15
Grayson	15
Green	15
Greenup	15
Hancock	10
Hardin	10
Harlan	15
Harrison	15
Hart	15
Henderson	15
Henry	15
Hickman	15
Hopkins	15
Jackson	20
Jefferson	10
Jessamine	15
Johnson	15
Kenton	10
Knott	20
Knox	20
Larue	15
Laurel	15
Lawrence	15
Lee	20
Leslie	20
Letcher	15
Lewis	20
Lincoln	20
Livingston	15
Logan	15
Lyon	15
Madison	15
Magoffin	20
Marion	15
Marshall	10
Martin	15
Mason	15
McCracken	10
McCreary	20
McLean	15
Meade	15
Menifee	20
Mercer	15
Metcalf	20

Monroe	15
Montgomery	15
Morgan	20
Muhlenberg	15
Nelson	10
Nicholas	15
Ohio	15
Oldham	5
Owen	15
Owsley	20
Pendleton	15
Perry	15
Pike	15
Powell	20
Pulaski	15
Robertson	20
Rockcastle	20
Rowan	15
Russell	15
Scott	5
Shelby	10
Simpson	15
Spencer	10
Taylor	15
Todd	15
Trigg	15
Trimble	15
Union	10
Warren	15
Washington	15
Wayne	20
Webster	10
Whitley	15
Wolfe	20
Woodford	5